

Montana Upland Game Bird Forecast Table	
Fall 2011	
Region 1	Forecast
Dusky Grouse	Harvest was about 2/3 of normal last year, expect similar or somewhat improved this fall. Cool wet spring may have had some impact on production.
Ruffed Grouse	Probably down from last year, well below average. Considerable cool and moisture in late May and early June likely affected nests and early hatches. Last year's harvest was about 68% of average.
Spruce Grouse	Anticipate below average numbers but could be some increase from last year. Later nesting chronology probably helped spruce grouse. Last year's harvest was 79% of average.
Pheasant	Spring and winter were generally okay in the valleys. Based on last year's harvest, anticipate continued below average, but improved over last year.
Region 2	Forecast
Dusky Grouse	Last year's harvest was 80% of average. Anticipate similar to last year.
Ruffed Grouse	This area experienced somewhat milder conditions than Region 1. Anticipate similar or lower abundance compared to last year, which was about 87% of average.
Spruce Grouse	Anticipate improvement from last year, close to average. Last year's harvest was about 78% of average.
Pheasant	Relatively open winter conditions between snow events. Anticipate continued improvement in pheasant numbers, above average. Public access to private lands for pheasant hunting can be difficult in this region.
Region 3	Forecast
Dusky Grouse	Last year's harvest was 70% of average. Anticipate improvement over last year, closer to average.

Ruffed Grouse	Last year's harvest was 76% of average. Anticipate similar to last year or some decline. 4 days of cool wet conditions June 7-10 may have affected chick survival.
Spruce Grouse	Anticipate another year above average, comparable to last year.
Gray Partridge	Anticipate improvement, closer to average. Cool wet conditions were probably in advance of primary hatching. Last year's harvest was about 80% of average.
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Last year's harvest was very low at 52% of recent year's average. Anticipate below average abundance but some improvement over last year. Cool moist conditions in the first half of June may have had some impact on chick survival, tempering optimism.
Sage-grouse	Last year's harvest was about 62% of recent average. Expect some improvement from last year, closer to average.
Pheasant	Last year was near average harvest. Anticipate similar or some improvement this fall.
Region 4 N	Forecast
Dusky Grouse	This area supports a relatively small population of dusky grouse. Harvest was up last year but anticipate a decrease, closer to average.
Ruffed Grouse	This area supports a relatively small population of ruffed grouse. Harvest was well above average last year. With cool wet conditions in early June, anticipate considerable drop in numbers from last year. Probably near or below average.
Gray Partridge	Gray partridge have experienced low numbers in this area over the past two years. Anticipate an improvement in gray partridge, nearer to average. Moisture came before hatch and likely benefited brood habitat.

Sharp-tailed Grouse	Anticipate below average, comparable to last year; cold wet weather in early June is likely to have had an impact, particularly along the East Front where moisture appeared to be more substantial.
Pheasant	Anticipate some improvement but still below average. The eastern portion of this area was subject to deep prolonged snow cover this past winter. Cool wet weather in early June likely affected chick survival for birds that had already hatched. Loss of CRP could substantially impact pheasants in this area.
Region 4 S	Forecast
Dusky Grouse	Last year's harvest was 80% of average. Anticipate below average abundance, similar to last year.
Ruffed Grouse	Anticipate comparable to last year, about average. Wet conditions in May could have affected nests.
Gray Partridge	Harvest last year was 83% of average. Anticipate similar or lower abundance this year. Weather events may have affected early chick survival.
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Anticipate average abundance this year, comparable or down from last year. Late May hatches would have faced a 3-day block of cool wet weather.
Sage-grouse	Lek survey results were comparable to last year, below average. Late May hatches would have been affected by substantial rains. Expect abundance to remain below average, comparable to last year.
Pheasant	Harvest was 76% of average last year. The eastern half of this area was subject to deep and prolonged snow cover this past winter, which would have affected overwinter survival. Rains and cool weather may have affected chick survival. Expect abundance to remain below average, comparable to last year.
Region 5	Forecast
Dusky Grouse	Last year's harvest was 75% of recent average. It is likely that May moisture interrupted nesting, but was early enough for re-nesting. Anticipate similar or improved numbers relative to last year.

Ruffed Grouse	Last year's harvest was 121% of average. Anticipate lower numbers this fall. Extreme moisture conditions in late May would have affected nesting and early hatches.
Gray Partridge	Although there was substantial moisture in June, it wasn't associated with cold weather. Last year's harvest was 68% of average. Anticipate improvement over last year, closer to average.
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Prairie grouse are among the earliest nesters. Nests were likely inundated over much of this region. Early hatching chicks would have faced 4 days of extreme moisture with some cold temperatures. Expect a decline in abundance this fall, below to well below average.
Sage-grouse	Nests were likely inundated over much of this region. Early hatching chicks would have faced 4 days of extreme moisture with some cold temperatures. Expect decline in abundance this fall relative to last fall, below average.
Pheasant	Winter conditions in the northeast part of the region would have affected overwinter survival. Some of the higher quality bottomland habitats experienced extensive flooding. Expect numbers to remain below average, comparable or down from last year.
Region 6 W	Forecast
Gray Partridge	Severe winter and extreme moisture during egg laying and early incubation would have affected overwinter survival and productivity. Last year's harvest was 55% of average. Anticipate continued below average abundance, may be down from last fall.
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Last year's harvest was 70% of average. Deep snow, extreme moist spring with cool to cold conditions. Anticipate continued below average, likely fewer than last year.

Sage-grouse	Overwinter survival was relatively good based on lek counts; excessive spring moisture probably resulted in considerable nest inundation and loss. Anticipate fall numbers being down from last year, which was near average.
Pheasant	Expect low winter survival outside of river bottom habitats; probably lots of renesting due to spring moisture; expect fewer birds this fall, well below average.
Region 6 E	Forecast
Gray Partridge	Last year's harvest was near average. Overwintering would have been challenging for all upland game birds in this part of the state. Anticipate below average abundance this fall.
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Prolonged deep snow and spring moisture would have impacted sharptails. Harvest was 91% of average last year. Anticipate a decline from last year.
Pheasant	Last year's harvest was 88% of average. With all-time record snowfall, expect numbers to be down this fall. Spring crowing counts were generally better than expected. Anticipate numbers will be down from last year, likely below average, particularly in areas that lacked effective winter cover.
Region 7N	Forecast
Gray Partridge	Overwintering would have been challenging for all upland game birds in this part of the state. Last year's harvest was 78% of average. Anticipate continued below average abundance, probably down from last year.
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Last year's harvest was 97% of average. Winter conditions in combination with extreme late May moisture are likely to result in lower numbers this fall.
Sage-grouse	Lek surveys were below average again this year. With untimely spring moisture, anticipate below average abundance again this fall, probably down from last fall.

Pheasant	Harvest was 56% of recent averages. Anticipate pheasant abundance to be down from last year, particularly in peripheral areas that lack good winter cover.
Region 7 S	Forecast
Gray Partridge	Harvest last year was well above average. Gray partridge may have lost some nests to inundation but the early timing of moisture probably allowed for renesting. Expect average to above average, likely down some from last year.
Sharp-tailed Grouse	Harvest last year was well above average. This spring's nest success was probably impacted by inundation during the end of May. Anticipate fewer grouse relative to last year, below average.
Sage-grouse	Nest success was probably impacted by inundation during end of May. Anticipate fewer grouse relative to last year, below average.
Pheasant	Harvest last year was average. The northeast portion of this area, which represents most of the better pheasant habitat, experienced deep snow through most of winter. Anticipate pheasant numbers being down, particularly in peripheral habitats that lack good winter cover.